

Message Text

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42 67

ACTION ARA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 260

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TAGS PINT JM

SUBJECT: MINISTER ALLAN ISAACS SACKED

1. P M MANLEY ANNOUNCED JANUARY 16 THAT HE HAD SUMMARILY TERMINATED THE APPOINTMENT OF ALLAN ISAACS AS MINISTER OF MINING AND NATURAL RESOURCES, INDICATING THAT THE SACKING WAS NOT UNRELATED TO THE "LEAKING" IN DECEMBER OF A SENSITIVE CABINET DOCUMENT ON THE SERIOUS PLIGHT OF THE ECONOMY. AN INVESTIGATION OF THE LEAK HAD LED TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY INISAACS' MINISTRY.

2. THE P. M. CLAIMED THAT HE HAD TOLD ISAACS OF HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH HIS PERFORMANCE AS A MINISTER M.P. ON DECEMBER 18 AND THAT THEY HAD AGREED THAT ISAACS WOULD RESIGN AT THE END OF MARCH FOR REASONS OF HEALTH. HOWEVER, AN ISAACS LETTER OF JANUARY 6 TO THE PRIME MINISTER "AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHICH I DO NOT PROPOSE TO DEAL WITH AT THIS TIME", FORCED HIS IMMEDIATE TERMINATION

2. THE AMBASSADOR RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING PERSONAL NOTE
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FROM ISAACS JUST BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT: "I AM SENDING

THIS MESSAGE BY A DEAR AND TRUSTED FRIEND OF OVER 25 YEARS. YOU WILL HAVE HEARD THE NEWS. I HAVE BEEN UNDER REMORSELESS AND ALMOST INTOLERABLE PRESSURE FOR OVER A YEAR, AND IT HAS NOW COME TO A SUDDEN CLIMAX. THIS IS NOT UNCONNECTED WITH MY VIEW OF FOREIGN POLICY AND PARTICULARLY OUR RELATIONS WITH YOUR GREAT COUNTRY. I HAVE AVOIDED CONTACTING YOU IN ORDER TO SPARE YOU EMBARRASSMENT. THE POSITION IS THAT I AM LEAVING THE GOVERNMENT WITH SOME RELIEF, BECAUSE AS TIME WENT BY THE INCONGRUITY BETWEEN MYSELF AND MY COLLEAGUES, ESPECIALLY THE PRIME MINISTER, HAS GROWN. I STAND, OF COURSE, IN RELATION OF YOURSELF AND THE UNITED STATES EXACTLY WHERE I WAS WHEN WE LAST SPOKE. I HAVE ONE CONCERN, AND THAT IS THAT THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNITED STATES MIGHT BE PRE-EMPTED IN THIS SUDDEN DEVELOPMENT, AND I MERELY ASK, PERHAPS UNNECESSARILY, THAT IN ANY ACCOMMODATION THAT MIGHT NOW BE REACHED BETWEEN THIS COUNTRY AND YOURS, MY INTEREST BE BORN IN MIND. I NEED SAY NO MORE TO A GREAT DIPLOMAT. THE GLEANER REFLECTS FAIRLY ACCURATELY MY POSITION. I REMAIN IN POLITICS AND WILL BE NOW MORE FREE TO SPEAK PUBLICLY THAN I HAVE BEEN SINCE WE MET. I AM SEEING THE PRIME MINISTER AT 10 THIS MORNING. I TELL YOU JUST IN CASE IT MAY BE OF PRACTICAL VALUE".

3. COMMENT: MANLEY HAS BEEN TRYING TO DUMP ISAACS FOR OVER A YEAR. THE MOST RECENT SERIOUS ATTEMPT WAS WHEN HE TRIED TO CONVINCE HIM TO TAKE THE APPOINTMENT AS AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. LAST SPRING. WHAT MANLEY PARTICULARLY WANTS IS ISAACS TO VACATE HIS NORTHERN ST. ANDREW SEAT IN PARLIAMENT. AS INDICATED IN HIS LETTER TO THE AMBASSADOR, ISAACS HAS NO PLAN OF RESIGNING HIS SEAT, BUT RATHER INTENDS TO USE HIS POSITION IN PARLIAMENT AS PLATFORM FROM WHICH TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE COURSE OF THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT

4. NORTHER ST. ANDREW IS THE LARGEST CONSTITUENCY ON THE ISLAND AND GAVE ISAACS THE LARGEST MAJORITY ENJOYED BY ANY PNP CANDIDATE IN THE 1972 GENERAL ELECTION. WHEN REDISTRICTING TIME COMES THIS NOVEMBER IT IS A CERTAINTY
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THAT THIS CONSTITUENCY WILL BE DIVIDED INTO AT LEAST TWO SEATS. REPORTEDLY, MANLEY WOULD LIKE PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL D.K. DUNCAN AND / OR SEVERAL OF HIS OTHER LEFT WING SUPPORTERS TO BE THE PNP CANDIDATES FOR THESE SEATS.

5. THERE IS A CERTAIN IRONY IN ISAACS' SACKING, FOR HE IS AN INTELLECTUALLY COMMITTED SOCIALIST OF LONG STANDING. HE WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE FOR THE LAST

ELECTION AND WAS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANIFESTO ON WHICH THE PNP CAMPAIGNED. HIS DISAFFECTION WITH MANLEY HAS GROWN WITH THE ASCENDANCY OF D.K. DUNCAN, ARNOLD BERTRAN, ET AL AS KEY ADVISORS TO THE PRIME MINISTER. HE HAS BEEN LESS THAN SHY IN DENOUNCING THEIR BRAND OF "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM" TO FRIENDS AS NOTHING MORE THAN "GANGSTERISM".

6. THE CABINET HAS GONE INTO A FOUR DAY RETREAT (JANUARY 18-21) AT ONE OF THE KINGSTON HOTELS TO DISCUSS THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ECONOMY DURING THE PAST YEAR AND PLANS FOR THIS YEAR'S BUDGETARY EXERCISE. WHETHER OTHER CABINET MEMBERS MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO JOIN ISAACS IN "EXILE" COULD WELL BE DETERMINED BY THE OUTCOME OF THE CABINET'S DELIBERATIONS. MINISTER OF MARKETING AND COMMERCE VIVIAN BLAKE STRONGLY IS RUMORED TO BE CONTEMPLATING SUCH ACTION GERARD

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